PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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Hutal citizens at work refurbishing the Green Zone wall in Maywand. Photo: USAID/LGCD

STABILIZATION

Community Stabilization Grants Engage Maywand Communities: With approximately 51,900 inhabitants and more than 160 villages, Maywand District has been deemed strategically important due to its location along Highway 1 in Kandahar Province. Previously one of the most unstable districts in Kandahar Province, security in Maywand has dramatically improved since last summer. The district government now plays a more active role in development, particularly around the district center of Hutal. In collaboration with the International Security Assistance Force and USAID, the district governor engaged communities through weekly shura meetings. The District Development Shura and village elders worked with the district governor to identify possible

development activities. USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project implemented 14 community stabilization grants (CSGs) in Hutal to rehabilitate approximately 9 kilometers of road and 14.7 kilometers of karez, improve drainage systems and sidewalks, and refurbish boundary walls. The grants also provided short-term employment to an estimated 300 local males. The district governor played an active role in selecting communities and monitoring progress, thereby building relationships with his constituents.

USAID Provides Property and Equipment to Khost Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock:

The economy of Khost Province is primarily based on agriculture. The majority of residents earn their livelihoods cultivating grain crops and raising cattle and goats. By providing key sector support, the Khost Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) is taking the lead in stabilizing the province's economy. DAIL recently partnered with the Agriculture Development Team and Provincial Reconstruction Team to provide veterinarian preventative-care training to improve the health of livestock and build storage houses to protect grain crops from inclement weather. In support of DAIL's outreach, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project received USAID approval to



The Khost director of DAIL signs handover documents for the equipment. Photo: USAID/LGCD

transfer the title and care of office property and equipment to DAIL, in preparation for closedown of LGCD's provincial office in Khost. The items included computers and office and guesthouse furniture. The items will provide DAIL with new resources to manage ongoing agricultural development activities and plan new initiatives, increasing DAIL's capacity to provide targeted services to foster Khost's agricultural and economic development.

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The provincial governor and U.S. Senior Civilian Representative at the courthouse closing ceremony. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Province Hilmand Gets New Courthouse: Representatives from the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) joined USAID and Coalition Forces for the opening ceremony of the Lashkar Gah Courthouse on March 7. USAID's Local Governance Community Development project initiatives totaling approximately \$872,000 to construct the new courthouse, procure furnishings, and install information technology equipment. The Hilmand provincial governor, U.S. Senior Civilian Representative for the Regional Platform Southwest, and the deputy provincial chief justice cut the ribbon as they spoke about this landmark achievement. Other government officials, local elders, and media representatives also attended the ceremony. During the ceremony, Provincial Governor

Gulab Mangal, expressed sincere appreciation to USAID and to the people of the United States, who have funded this activity and many other USAID interventions in the province.

Sub-District Seven CSGs Build Local Governance: In the outskirts of Kandahar City, the Sub-District Seven manager, wakils, and residents of Sub-District Seven worked together to identify, develop, and implement three community stabilization grants (CSGs). This week, residents of Noor Ahmad, Naik Mohammad, Akhunzada, and Haji Habibullah villages signed three CSGs in the Sub-District Seven manager's office. The grants will fund 1,032 meters of drainage construction and 991 meters of road graveling, and build 35 concrete slabs to be used for drainage coverage. The stability initiatives will provide targeted community members with approximately 3,600 person-days of employment. The CSGs are part of USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project's larger initiative in support of Hamkari de Kandahar Lepara, GIRoA's plan to improve local governance in Kandahar City.

EDUCATION

Kabul Mayor Speaks at AUAF: Kabul Mayor M.Y. Nawandish visited the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) on March 2, where he delivered a lecture entitled, "The Future of Kabul City" to a standing-room-only crowd of students, staff, and faculty. AUAF is benefiting from USAID support. The mayor's appearance at AUAF gave students a chance to hear from and question one of Kabul's most popular local officials, and to learn more about the city's development plans. Noting that Kabul was designed to support a much smaller population, Nawandish said work today "must focus on providing this city of five million people with basic resources, including paved roads, stable electricity, and clean drinking water," eliciting applause from the audience. The mayor stated his goal is to transform Kabul, and restore it to the way it



AUAF founder Dr. Sharif Fayez, right presents Kabul Mayor M.Y. Nawandish with a plaque of appreciation for his service, Photo: USAID/AUAF

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looked before heavy fighting destroyed major parts of the city. "In one year, you will see a new Kabul, I promise," he said, to cheers from the audience. He unveiled two specific projects that are part of his effort: a new metro bus system and new, rehabilitated city parks for recreational purposes. He also delivered a clear jobs pitch to students, informing them that the city "will be hiring accomplished people with a variety of backgrounds, from engineering to business, to get Kabul back on its feet. Keep us in mind when you graduate."



Seated from left, AUAF President Dr. C Michael Smith and Acting Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Dr. Daoud Ali Najafi sign the memorandum of understanding for English testing of Afghan Civil Aviation employees, witnessed by AUAF founder Dr. Sharif Fayez (far right) and ministry staff standing. Photo: USAID/AUAF

English Proficiency Testing Program Will Boost Afghan Aviation Safety: Aviation safety in Afghanistan will soon be enhanced thanks to a new English language testing program approved on March 15, by the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation. Under a memorandum of understanding signed by Acting Minister Dr. Daoud Ali Najafi, all pilots and air traffic controllers in Afghanistan will be tested for English language proficiency in a new program at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF). The testing will ensure that Afghan aviation employees meet the English language proficiency standards established by the International Civil Aviation Organization.

The computer-based testing program will be conducted by AUAF's Professional Development Institute, which provides English-language training and testing, as well as

custom-training programs for ministries, businesses, and civic organizations. AUAF is a major beneficiary of USAID support, and has exclusive authority to conduct all English proficiency exams.



Moot Court Event participants. Photo: USAID/RLS-F

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Rule of Law Stabilization-Formal (RLS-F) Program: USAID's RLS-F Program assists the human and institutional capacity of the justice sector, increases the public's access to justice, particularly women, and promotes the public's demand for a robust rule of law environment in Afghanistan. On March 1 and 2, the RLS-F Program orchestrated the Afghanistan Jessup Moot Court Competition. Five universities from around Afghanistan sent student teams to compete in the International Jessup Moot Court Competition at the Kabul Appellate Court for the chance to represent Afghanistan at the international competition in Washington, D.C. The competition was very close, with each team winning at

least one round, and the two final teams, al Biruni and Kabul University tied going into the final round on the last day. Students from several teams took home individual awards and the team

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from Kabul University was the overall champion team coming from the Shari'a Law Faculty and one of the few composed of two men and two women.

The Philip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition is the world's largest and most prestigious moot-court competition with teams from more than 500 law schools and 80 different countries. Last year, Afghanistan's champion team (al Biruni) was awarded the "Spirit of the Jessup Award," a recognition devoted to the team that best exemplifies the spirit of camaraderie, academic excellence, competitiveness, and the appreciation of fellow competitors. The competition is an established methodology for law students around the world to hone their legal skills through head-to-head courtroom activities that require intensive study, preparation, critical thinking, and debating skills.

Kabul City Initiative (KCI) Supports Environmental Activities: USAID's KCI supported a tree-planting event with U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry, International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Commander General David Petraeus and Kabul Mayor Nawandish at Wazir Akbar Khan Hill on Sunday, March 6. The event inaugurated the tree-planting season, with a contribution of 60,000 trees from USAID, 15,000 trees from ISAF, and 15,000 trees from the government of Turkey. On March 10, Kabul Mayor Nawandish celebrated a KCI supported Women's Day at Babur's Gardens that was attended by USAID Deputy Mission Director Linda Gregory. About 4,000 women from all districts participated. The Kabul Municipality presented compost "how-to" lectures and distributed rose bushes.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Community Becomes Free from Open Human Waste:

The mountainous district of Faizabad in Badakhshan Province suffers from lack of proper sanitation and hygiene. Poor personal hygiene, open defecation practices, and lack of proper sanitation facilities have challenged the lives of residents. With the support of USAID, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is striving to tackle sanitation-related problems within Afghan communities. Through USAID's Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project, every household in Itrachi Hakimabad village in Faizabad district has now constructed a new latrine or improved an existing one to meet basic sanitation standards. After residents received hygiene training, open defecation has stopped, and now basic



Inspection of newly constructed latrine with hygiene promotion poster in Itarchi, Faizabad District.

hygiene and sanitation behaviors have improved. "The community members constructed latrines because we learned from USAID facilitators what a negative impact poor sanitation had on our daily lives," said Jalaluddin, a villager of Itarchi Hakimabad. He continued, "Our children were badly affected by diarrhea, but now we are proud of having constructed latrines for every household in order to protect everyone's health."

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Poor sanitation and contaminated water are leading causes of water borne diarrheal diseases. Photo: LISAID/SWSS

Improved Hygiene and Sanitation Reduces Diarrheal Diseases: Despite the many challenges of living in remote areas of Afghanistan, diarrhea remains a prominent problem threatening children less than five years of age. This easily preventable condition is most often caused by poor hygiene and sanitation. Through its Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project, USAID is implementing a Community Led-Total Sanitation (CLTS) approach in Chenar-e-Gunjishkan of Kalafgan District in Takhar Province, which empowers residents to take responsibility for improving their own communal sanitation practices. A community health worker summed up the results of the Project by stating, "I am responsible for provision of oral rehydration salt sachets for children suffering from diarrhea. I was

distributing too many sachets before the CLTS initiative started, but since last month, I was asked for only one sachet."

HEALTH

Baghlan Provincial Hospital Reopens New Blood Bank: On March 14, the Baghlan Provincial Hospital reopened its blood donation center. The hospital director, provincial director of health, and other provincial officials attended the opening. USAID-funded Health Care Improvement project provided new refrigeration units, testing equipment, and office furniture needed to operate a fully functional blood bank. During this locally televised event, government officials stressed the need for increased public awareness regarding this much needed basic social health service.



Rahima Zarifi, director of Woman's Affairs helps cut the ribbon at the opening of the Baghlan Provincial Hospital refurbished blood bank. Photo: USAID/Afghanistan